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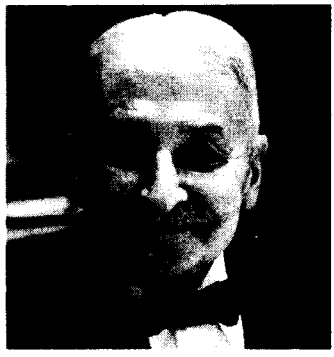

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4

BETWEEN FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM

Dynamics of the Mixed Economy: Toward a Theory of Interventionism

Sanford Ikeda
Routledge, 1997, xiv + 296 pgs.

Ludwig von Mises's defense of the free market against its rivals extended far beyond the proof of the impossibility of socialist calculation for which he is best known. As Sanford Ikeda reminds us in this important and erudite book, Mises advanced an argument designed to undermine a supposed third economic system—interventionism—alleged by its supporters to combine features of capitalism and socialism. Ikeda does us all a service with his careful analysis of Mises's argument, although some of his modifications and extensions of it seem to me questionable.

Mises exposes interventionism for the pipedream it is, as the example of price control best illustrates. The direct result of a price ceiling, as everyone except bureaucrats knows from elementary economics, is a

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shortage. Sellers of a good offer less quantities for sale at the imposed lower price than consumers wish to purchase.

What is to be done? As Mises saw matters, the interventionists have two alternatives. They may repeal the ceiling and return to the free market. But then what of the poor unable to buy at the higher price?

If the temptation to intervene proves irresistible, the planners may decide to assist retailers to sell enough to meet the quantity demanded at the lower price. How may they do so? By imposing further price ceilings on the products retailers must purchase in order to carry on their business. Given lower costs, retailers will lower their prices.

The choice confronting society is restricted to socialism or capitalism.

The results of the new initiative will come as no surprise. The new price ceilings will cause shortages in the goods on which they are imposed, for the same reason as before. Once more the planners confront a choice: return to the free market or press on with yet more controls. Should they continue along the path of regulation, they will soon arrive at a system in which the government sets all prices. And this is socialism, not capitalism.

Mises endeavored to show that any attempt to interfere with the working of the free market would fail of its intended purpose. That being so, there is no third, interventionist system on the agenda: the choice confronting society is restricted to socialism or capitalism.

Ikeda explains Mises's argument in painstaking detail. I found especially valuable his distinction between several different senses in which an interventionist measure may fail, from the viewpoint of its supporters, to achieve its aims (pp. 110–12). Further, our author carefully delineates areas to which Mises's argument does not directly apply, such as nationalization of industry. As he notes, Mises directed his principal attention to measures that aimed to regulate the market, rather than redistribute wealth and income.

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Ikeda's principal aim is to explain the leftist's persistence in interventionist error.

Though Mises's critique of interventionism was centered elsewhere, he does adduce a vital point that bears on redistributionist policies, as Ikeda ably brings out. Redistribution depends on a "reserve fund" of assets which the planners can plunder. Should interventionists radically upset production, there will be no funds to redistribute. To cite Mises himself: "An essential point in the social philosophy of interventionism is the existence of an inexhaustible fund which can be squeezed forever. The whole system of interventionism collapses when this function is drained off: The Santa Claus principle liquidates itself" (pp. 125–26, quoting Mises, *Human Action*).

Our author's aims extend far beyond the task of expounding Mises's case against intervention. He notes a problem in Mises's argument, which he terms the "Misesian paradox." Intervention, according to Mises, is an unstable system. But are not all the economies of the world interventionist to some degree? Even the Soviet system, of blessed memory, was more accurately viewed as a mixed system rather than a full-scale socialist one. How could it have been the latter, given the soundness of Mises's calculation argument?

We may press the point further. Not only does price control lead to shortages, it does so quite obviously. Why then do interventionists persist in butting their heads against the wall? One would think that even a leftist would eventually see the error of his ways.

Ikeda's principal aim is to explain this persistence in error. In his quest to do so, he imposes on himself a severe methodological constraint. He wishes to explain the growth and contraction of intervention "in terms of endogenous economic forces," i.e., using forces internal to the economic system (p. 14).

This constraint leads him to put to one side the most popular way among public choice economists to explain support for seemingly irrational intervention. Richard Wagner and other "public choicers" point to self-interest: tariffs and minimum wage laws, for example, are very much to the advantage of certain groups, who manipulate the political process to their benefit and everyone else's loss.

Ikeda does not reject this view as false—far from it. But it fails to explain what, within the system itself, induces actors to institute greater or less intervention. Once more, it is the endogenous explanation that he seeks.

He finds the answer to his quest in Hayek and Kirzner and accordingly embeds Mises's argument in the

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framework of the "knowledge problem." As Hayek and Kirzner see matters, actors in the economy continually face consequences of their actions which they did not anticipate. In Kirzner's phrase, they constantly confront "radical ignorance."

Here precisely, according to our author, lies the key to the Misesian paradox. Because of the large numbers of events taking place in the economy, and their complicated connections, planners cannot adequately assess the results of their interventions. Hence, in a way that Ikeda describes in elaborate detail, they may continue with their policies in spite of what strikes the informed Austrian observer as manifest absurdity.

But has not Ikeda proved too much? If the economy is *that* complex, why should we expect capitalism to work either? Ikeda has a ready response. Though the price system never reaches perfect equilibrium, its signals alert entrepreneurs that misallocation of resources is present, enabling continual improvement in satisfaction of consumer wants.

In the course of his account of interventionism's progress, Ikeda makes an especially insightful point. As the economy approaches more closely to socialism, Mises's socialist calculation argument becomes ever more relevant. That is to say, the calculation argument applies not just to full socialism. Rather, if an economy becomes significantly socialist, to that extent chaos takes the place of the market. This argument strikes me as excellent, but here for once our author's remarkable erudition fails him. Murray Rothbard made an analogous point in *Man, Economy, and State*. He there noted that "islands of calculational chaos" restrict the size of firms. Ikeda fails to note this adumbration of his own argument.

Ikeda's ingenuity commands our admiration, but he argues with a Rube–Goldberg abundance of qualifications.

What is one to make of Ikeda's modification of Mises? Ikeda's ingenuity commands our admiration, but he argues with a Rube–Goldberg abundance of qualifications, making evaluation of his claims difficult. Planners would do thus and so, unless of course such and such circumstances arise, in which case—perhaps. No doubt the fault is my own, and I do not presume to assess him badly owing to my own lack of acuity.

On a few points I venture to think our author mistaken. He uses H.A. Simon's notion of "bounded" satisficing rationality to explain in part the mistakes that interventionists make (see, e.g., pp. 100, 160). But Simon thinks that the process he describes is a *rational* method of choice.

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Ikeda has made complicated what is in Mises a very simple argument.

If Ikeda disagrees, he should explain why the use of bounded rationality is liable to eventuate in error.

Further, in his argument for the instability of the minimal state, he claims that "since the minimal state is currently providing only those services essential to the operation of the catallaxy, a reduction in the supply of governmental services would not be feasible" (p. 205). This seems to me to ignore the possibility of downward revisions in the *quantity* of these essential services. Incidentally, Anthony de Jasay advances an argument about the minimal state quite similar to Ikeda's in *Social Contract, Free Ride* (Oxford 1989).

More fundamentally, I wonder whether the entire search for endogenous explanation is on the right lines. Why *must* we seek an account of this type, if an appeal to "outside" causes is simpler? I suspect that Ikeda has, through his rigid adherence to an ideal of explanation, made complicated what is after all in Mises a very simple argument. But even if this criticism is right, Ikeda has given us a great deal of importance to think about. ◆

CRANK VERSUS CRANK

Without a Prayer: Ayn Rand and the Close of Her System

John W. Robbins
The Trinity Foundation, 1997, xvii + 399 pgs.

John Robbins begins with an excellent idea, but unfortunately his book does not fulfill the promise of his initial project. Robbins is a disciple of the late Gordon Clark, a major Calvinist philosopher and theologian. (Robbins's Trinity Foundation has republished almost all of Clark's vast output.) Robbins proposes to evaluate Ayn Rand's thought from the standpoint of Clark's philosophy.

In my view, this is indeed a project worth undertaking, since Clark was on the whole an outstanding thinker. (Though he is best known to non-Calvinists as a scholar of Hellenistic philosophy, his scope was far wider than this.) But Robbins has adopted uncritically some of Clark's least defensible views; and our author fares even worse in the area likely to be of chief interest to many readers, Rand's political philosophy. Here, because Clark wrote comparatively little on politics, Robbins is largely on his own, and he does not come off well. In one place, he deviates from Clark to his cost.

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Clark, and his disciple Robbins, agree with Rand on a fundamental point: the theory of knowledge is the linchpin of philosophy. But they could not differ more in their approaches to this subject. For Rand, knowledge arises through abstraction from the particulars of sense. She devised an elaborate account of concepts as measurement, which her acolytes view as one of her foremost achievements.

By contrast, Clark, strongly influenced by St. Augustine, rejected empiricism altogether. Robbins uses Clark's view to great effect in the best part of the book, a devastating analysis of Rand's position on abstraction and knowledge. Many concepts seem totally inexplicable as abstractions from sense particulars: how, for instance, is the concept "not" acquired in this way? Rand does not tell us, nor does she offer any arguments that her account of concept-formation is true.

But, Randians will claim, is it not self-contradictory to deny that we gain knowledge through the senses? Not at all, replies Robbins: "Empiricism does not follow from the absurdity of skepticism. Both Rand and [Nathaniel] Branden begged the question.... The unwarranted leap from the possibility of knowledge to the certainty that knowledge is possible only through the senses is quite obvious in their works" (p. 33).

Robbins's criticism of Rand here strikes home; but his own account of knowledge seems, if anything, much worse than Rand's. His views are infected by an unwarranted skepticism of massive proportions. Science, for instance, has to go: "One of the implications of Clark's logically rigorous analysis of laboratory procedure is this: If there is an infinite number of curves that may be drawn through any series of data-points or data areas, then one's chances of choosing the correct curve are one in infinity, or zero. That means that all the laws of science are false, and all have the same probability: zero" (p. 52).

According to Robbins, all the laws of science are false, and all have the same probability: zero.

This will never do. First, why need all scientific theories be reduced to curves passing through data-points? That is empiricism with a vengeance! If a theory consists of more than an arrangement of the data it endeavors to explain, perhaps there is a way to choose between empirically equivalent theories. And what of sciences such as economics whose laws are not curves of points?

And this is the least of the argument's problems. The various curves, by hypothesis, all correctly generate the same data-points. How does it

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follow from this that they are all false? From "we cannot choose which member of a set is the *real* curve" to "all the curves are false" is an "inference" the logic of which escapes me. And the zero probability argument assumes without warrant that each curve has an equal probability of truth. In fairness to Clark though, readers should examine his defense of his view of science, *Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, for themselves.

Does Robbins really think that a car mechanic operates purely through deduction?

Robbins invokes another dubious argument, which he takes from Bertrand Russell, in his assault on science. Induction, it seems, is logically fallacious, since it rests on the logical fallacy of affirming the consequent. My theory predicts the sun will rise tomorrow; it does rise; therefore, I claim confirmation for my view. But do I not reason in this way: "if A, then B; B; therefore A"? And of course this does not follow. "What Russell was illustrating, of course, is the elementary logical fallacy of asserting the consequent, which is the heart of the scientific method. No competent mechanic would make the same mistake as the scientist in dealing with a car that won't start" (p. 55).

But all this shows is that induction is not deduction. Why cannot we say that if the sun comes up, my theory is *confirmed*, even though it does not deductively follow from the observation that my theory is true? Suppose I toss a coin in the air two hundred times, and each time it comes up heads. Am I wrong to claim strong support for the theory that the coin is loaded? And does Robbins really think that a car mechanic operates purely through deduction?

Since Robbins makes such a fuss about affirmation of the consequent, it is ironic that in one place he falls victim to a variant of the same fallacy. He writes: "Congressman Davy Crockett expressed a similar wish: 'If I ever vote for another unconstitutional law, I wish I may be shot.' Well, Crockett was shot at the Alamo, so he may have voted for another unconstitutional law" (p. xvii). This argument has the form: If A, then B; B; therefore, possibly A. "If the moon is made of green cheese, then Clinton is President; Clinton is President; therefore, possibly the moon is made of green cheese." Robbins might peruse with profit Clark's text, *Logic*, which his foundation publishes.

The foregoing has perhaps been rather far from the interests of most readers of *The Mises Review*, so let us abandon epistemology for more congenial climes. Robbins finds no more

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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April 3-4, 1998
Auburn, Alabama

MISES UNIVERSITY
August 1-8, 1998
Auburn, Alabama

PRESIDENCY CONFERENCE
October 16-17, 1998
Warm Springs, Georgia

Auburn Weekly Seminars

SEMINAR IN AUSTRIAN ECONOMICS
Directed by Prof. Leland Yeager
Fall Quarter 1997

MAN, ECONOMY, AND STATE
Directed by Mises Fellow Mark Brandly
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merit in Rand's political theory than in her epistemology, but here his criticisms usually misfire.

The notion of inalienable rights, in particular, induces in our author his characteristic tone of scorn: "Is not self-defense a violation of rights? If rights are innate and inalienable, how can a criminal lose his rights? If rights come from his identity as a man, is not a criminal still a man, and therefore a possessor of rights? If rights are inalienable by nature, by the law of identity, how can they be alienated" (p. 189)?

Robbins never pauses to ask himself whether any supporter of inalienable rights means by this that an aggressor cannot be resisted, or a criminal punished. A forfeiture of a right and an alienation of a right are two very different things. If you have an inalienable right to liberty, you may not give up that right by selling yourself into slavery; but you may justly have your liberty (and perhaps your life) taken away should you violate the rights of others. Robbins has simply defined "inalienable" in an idiosyncratic way and on this basis refuted a view that no one (except perhaps Robert Le Fevre and his followers) holds.

Robbins should have paid closer attention to his mentor Clark, who appears to have found inalienable rights entirely acceptable. He states, for example: "What is needed to protect our unalienable rights is a popular acceptance of biblical principle" (Gordon Clark, *Essays on Ethics and Politics* [Trinity Foundation, 1992], p. 160). Robbins would have done well to read this book himself, however much we must thank him for making it available to others.

Our author strongly objects to Rand's "theory of a monopolistic government voluntarily financed by a contract insurance program" (pp. 202-03). A protection agency of this sort, he thinks, could not long prevent

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competing protection agencies from arising. Perhaps not; but he gives no argument that a monopolistic agency is desirable. Rand also comes under assault because she opposed taxation, a governmental activity Robbins considers entirely justifiable.

Finally, I must strongly protest the following passage: "Murray Rothbard, a Jewish atheist, hated Calvinism passionately, and favored Catholicism. The anarchist Rothbard favored the totalitarian Roman church" (pp. 230–31). This is bigoted and coarse. ◆

WHAT TOWER? WHAT BABEL?

Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education

Martha C. Nussbaum
Harvard University Press, 1997, 338 pgs.

Conservatives and leftists often characterize the struggle over the contemporary university in the same way, though of course accompanied by opposing value judgments. On the one side stands the traditional curriculum, with subjects such as classics, philosophy, history, English, foreign languages, mathematics, and the sciences. Opposed to this is the new multiculturalism, whose advocates contend that the traditional subjects serve as instruments of oppression.

The new multiculturalists contend that traditional subjects serve as instruments of oppression.

To secure the interests of blacks, Asians, Hispanics, women, homosexuals, and various other hitherto silent sufferers, new subjects are necessary: Black Studies, Women's Studies, Gay Studies, and so on and on. Among the main forces the new disciplines aim to combat, according to many of their practitioners, is that supreme instrument of white male oppression—Western logic and reason.

Classics, the study of Latin and Greek, occupies a central place in the traditional view; and one might anticipate that an eminent classicist writing on the university would have little good to say about multiculturalism. Martha Nussbaum, a well-known specialist in classical philosophy, seems ideally qualified to champion the old values. Surely the eminent author of *A Commentary on Aristotle's "De Motu Animalium"* and *The Fragility of Goodness* will not look with favor on efforts to replace Plato with LeRoi Jones in the classroom.

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But Nussbaum cuts across conventional expectations. She maintains that devotion to the values of classical philosophy, especially as Socrates and the Stoics embody these values, mandates multiculturalism.

The first step in her argument seems to me unquestionably right. Students need to learn to think logically. They must be able to analyze discourse critically, discerning whether an argument's premises validly imply its conclusion. Nussbaum rightly instances Socrates as a prime advocate of this style of thought, and she has some appropriately severe things to say about deconstructionists and others who question the binding force of logic.

Nussbaum is an unscrupulous propagandist, avid to defend her opinions by fair means or foul.

"What is deeply pernicious in today's academy, then," she writes, "is the tendency to dismiss the whole idea of pursuing truth and objectivity as if those aims could no longer guide us.... Postmodernists do not justify their more extreme conclusions with compelling arguments.... Derrida on truth is simply not worth studying for someone who has been studying Quine and Putnam and Davidson" (pp. 40–41).

I have so far left unstated a fact crucial if one is to understand Martha Nussbaum. She is in my view an unscrupulous propagandist, avid to defend her opinions by fair means or foul; and I regret to say that this aspect of her *modus operandi* soon surfaces in the book.

After defending logic, she briefly describes a cosmopolitan view that she derives from her study of Stoicism. This she insinuates without proof is demanded of someone adequately trained in critical reasoning. She states: "The education of the *Kosmou politēs* [world-citizen] is thus closely connected to Socratic inquiry and the goal of an examined life. For attaining membership in the world community entails a willingness to doubt the goodness of one's own way and to enter into the give and take of critical argument about ethical and political choices" (p. 62).

Whatever one thinks of the Stoic goal, or for that matter of Socratic questioning, it should be clear that this is not to be identified with logical thought. Why cannot, say, a religious believer, who accepts his creed as axiomatically true, think in entire accord with the rules of logic? It is not a principle of logic, Professor Nussbaum to the contrary notwithstanding, that "all questions are open questions."

And surely Professor Nussbaum knows full well that this very issue

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has occasioned much discussion in contemporary analytic philosophy. Alvin Plantinga and others have famously contended that it is *not* a requirement of rationality that a "properly basic belief" be supported by argument. Nussbaum no doubt disagrees: but surely she had a duty to inform her readers of the existence of controversy on the point. She omits to do so, instead proceeding rather like this: logic → Socrates → Stoicism → The Good.

Indeed, Nussbaum has a habit of eliding facts inconvenient to her thesis. She never bothers to inform us that the Stoic defense of cosmopolitanism often rested on metaphysical doctrines that, to say the least, are highly controversial. As an example, many Stoics were cosmopolitans because they believed that human beings all contain sparks from the same divine fire. She thinks it unnecessary to mention that her beloved Marcus Aurelius was a worse persecutor of Christians than Nero, nor does she quote Seneca's "humanitarian" statement that it is natural to recoil in horror at the sight of a poor man. Readers dependent on her will not learn that her account of Socrates as a democrat, though backed by the eminent authority of Gregory Vlastos, is controversial.

Nussbaum has a habit of eliding facts inconvenient to her thesis.

Though it is a bit by the way, I shall give two more examples from other sources that show Nussbaum in her true colors. In her sworn testimony at a trial in Colorado involving that state's ordinance banning affirmative action for homosexuals, she found herself in dispute with John Finnis, a Roman Catholic legal theorist from Oxford. She claimed, against Finnis, that a Greek word used by Plato in *The Laws* should not be taken as critical of homosexuality. In support she cited an outdated edition of the standard Greek lexicon, Liddell and Scott. She did not inform the Court that the current edition of Liddell-Scott cites the very sentence at issue in *The Laws* as an instance of the word's pejorative use.

Again, in a recent dispute, Roger Scruton questioned her reliance on Gary Comstock for claims about violence toward homosexuals. In response to Scruton's claim that Comstock is biased, Nussbaum remarked that there is no evidence in Comstock's book that he is in fact homosexual. In point of fact, Comstock is a leading "gay theologian." Surely Nussbaum must have come across Comstock's *Gay Theology Without Apology*. Her carefully worded remark—not in *this* book—is disingenuous or, at best, ignorant in the extreme.

To return to *Cultivating Humanity*, it appears at first glance that Nussbaum's slippery way with truth avails her nothing. She defends Stoic

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cosmopolitanism and Socratic questioning; but what have these to do with multiculturalism? Are not the supporters of identity politics and postmodernism opponents of the Stoicism she admires?

But this difficulty proves amendable to our author's methods. She describes a number of multicultural courses in which, she claims, the values of critical thinking occupy a high place: "At Harvard University, Amartya Sen offers a course called 'Hunger and Famine.' Standard topics in development economics are given a new twist, as students learn to think about the relationship of hunger to gender and also to democratic political institutions in areas of the world ranging from Africa to China to India" (p. 78).

No doubt Sen, a world-famous economist, offers a valuable course; and Nussbaum mentions a few other offerings that sound promising. But how can a few instances, described by someone with a proven record of tendentiousness, counter the fact,

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Multiculturalism is synonymous with leftist slogans and racial strife.

known to every informed observer, that multiculturalism is synonymous with leftist slogans and racial strife? (Readers who doubt this should consult *Literature Lost*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

Once more our author is equal to the task. Critics of multiculturalism practice a fatally flawed method: "is the feminist classroom a place of indoctrination instead of a place of reasoned debate? [Christina] Hoff Sommers' claim has been echoed by former women's studies professors Daphne Patai and Noretta Kortge [sic—the correct spelling is Koertge] in their book *Professing Feminism*.... Like Hoff Sommers, they base their conclusions on a small number of anecdotes, and professors interviewed for the volume make their comments anonymously" (p. 202).

Professor Nussbaum has really outdone herself here. The whole basis of her roseate view of the new courses consists of a few anecdotes of her own, told in the unbiased way we have already examined. But it is her *opponents* who lack methodological rigor. Oh, brother! ◆

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ISLAND OF SANITY

Literature Lost: Social Agendas and the Corruption of the Humanities

John M. Ellis
Yale University Press, 1997, *x* + 262 pgs.

Like Martha Nussbaum, whose *Cultivating Humanity* is addressed above, John M. Ellis is concerned with multiculturalism. His excellent book, taken together with her less than excellent one, enables readers to gain a firm grasp on the new style of education.

A common argument for multiculturalism proceeds in this way. The humanities have been for too long cramped by a narrow canon of acceptable works. Multiculturalism does not debase education; it expands the humanities by exposing students to new perspectives.

Ellis, a distinguished scholar of German literature and the author of the best analysis of deconstruction, quickly locates the flaw in this argument. (His earlier volume is called *Against Deconstruction*—see whether you can guess his view of that movement.) Race-gender-class scholars do indeed consider works not previously studied in humanities departments. But they do not analyze these works in order to extend their knowledge. Quite the contrary, they impose on all works a distinctive set of political concerns. All literary works wind up conveying the same banal message, and students' literary sensibilities become coarsened.

Under multiculturalism, all literary works wind up conveying the same banal message, and students' literary sensibilities become coarsened.

The context of race-gender-class critics "is merely a different context, wider, to be sure, in the sense that it encompasses more phenomena than literature, but also narrower, in that it addresses nothing but a single strand that runs intermittently through that widened body of phenomena. In the relevant sense, then, this context is narrower, not wider" (p. 43).

And not only is the context narrower, literary works that fall within its purview are analyzed according to a bizarre system that our author amusingly terms PC logic. This sophistical system has two main components. Following Michael Foucault, PC theorists hold that "covert relations of power are the driving force in human situations" (p. 161). Nothing else matters. Against this, Ellis makes a commonsense point that unfortunately seems far beyond

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Literature Lost is an indispensable guide to current literary studies.

our "advanced thinkers"; power is of value not for itself, but for what its wielders accomplish with it. "Power is a means, not an end, and it should have no independent context as an idea" (p. 163).

How can the race-gender-class brigade avoid recognition of so obvious a truth? They do so, Ellis maintains, by a peculiar mode of "reasoning." This breaks down distinctions by denying that pure categories exist. No one, let us suppose, is completely unbiased. Then, everyone is biased, and partisan posturing is held to be just as good as, if not better than, allegedly disinterested study.

Ellis locates an especially bizarre example of this "logic." "The arguments of Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin begin by focusing on the apparent difference between consensual sexual activity and rape.... Is there any sexual activity that is absolutely and completely free of the slightest hint of coercion or persuasion? Possibly not.... Then the distinction between rape and consensual activity breaks down; hence all sexual activity is coerced and as such there is no difference between rape and any other sexual activity" (p. 170). And MacKinnon is taken to be a serious thinker by many of the high and mighty of academia.

Ideas, if they can be called that, of this caliber of course cannot withstand critical examination. What then are multiculturalists to do? The answer may readily be guessed; critical analysis of PC ideas is forbidden. Ellis reports an instance in which a women's studies professor required students in her class to sign a set of "Ground Rules" that mandated acceptance of her views without question (p. 149).

So far my remarks have been entirely favorable to Ellis's book, but of course in *The Mises Review* this cannot be allowed to continue unchecked. I shall therefore venture one mild criticism. Ellis suggests here, and much more fully in *Against Deconstruction*, that our categories never fully grasp reality. They impose distinctions, not perfectly true of the "booming, buzzing confusion" of the world. Precisely the failing of deconstructivists, Ellis thinks, is to take this fact too far: they wrongly think it denies us knowledge of the world altogether. In my view, Ellis has too quickly dismissed a more robustly realistic position.

That said, I can return to praising the book. *Literature Lost* is an indispensable guide to current literary studies; if its message is heeded, it has the potential to achieve great good.[1] ◆

[1] I found p. 242, note 11, especially worth reading.

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CENTRAL PLANNING FOR SELF-ESTEEM

Antidiscrimination Law and Social Equality

Andrew Koppelman
Yale University Press, 1996, x + 276 pgs.

Andrew Koppelman is clearly a writer of considerable intelligence, and exceptionally well-read in political philosophy, ethics, and law. But he puts his talent in the service of a bizarre idea.

As our author sees matters, "many, and perhaps most Americans" endorse two contradictory propositions: "(1) Part of what defines a free society is that it is none of the government's business what citizens believe and that the shaping of citizens' beliefs is not a legitimate task of a liberal state, (2) Racism, sexism, and similar ideologies are so evil and destructive of the proper workings of society that the state should do whatever it can to eradicate them" (p. 1).

Koppelman proposes to resolve the contradiction by weakening the first proposition. Because everyone has a right to equal concern and respect, preferences of people that violate these rights have no moral standing. Hence in pursuit of the "antidiscrimination project" the state may proceed quite radically to attempt to transform its citizens into Good Little Liberals.

In pursuit of the "antidiscrimination project" the state may proceed quite radically to attempt to transform its citizens.

Unfortunately for his project, but fortunately for liberty, Koppelman offers no justification for the alleged right of equal concern and respect on which his whole edifice rests. The closest he comes to an argument is found in his discussion of Ronald Dworkin, but his (and Dworkin's) remarks evince numerous fallacies.

Dworkin begins from a utilitarian view in which policy is determined by people's preferences. But, he (and Koppelman following him) suggests, we cannot take account of external preferences; i.e., preferences people have about the welfare of others. To do so is to fail to count everyone's preferences equally. Suppose someone hates androgynous dwarfs and wishes them ill. If the hater's preference that the dwarf be frustrated is allowed into our calculus, then the dwarf's preferences are diluted.

I entirely fail to see the force of this. In the imagined circumstance, everyone's preference is being counted equally. If the dwarf wants a door three feet high and the hater wants him not to get the door, why is

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it unequal counting to include both preferences?

Well, you might say, the dwarf has less chance to have his preferences realized, other things being equal, than someone whose preferences are not opposed by others. True enough, but so what? Someone with idiosyncratic preferences has, other things being equal, less chance of having his preferences realized than someone with tastes closer to the standard.

If I am the only member of a large club who wishes to buy a bull to sacrifice to Jupiter, I am unlikely to get what I want, even if no one else in the club wishes my preference frustrated. The others simply wish to spend the club's money on less exotic projects. Am I being treated unequally? It hardly seems plausible.

If the dwarf wants a door three feet high and the hater wants him not to get the door, why is it unequal counting to include both preferences?

Further, if external preferences cannot be counted, then preferences that certain people receive what they want must also be cast out. And this blocks Koppelman's project from the start: one cannot count his preference that his favored groups have their preferences realized.

And suppose the Dworkin–Koppelman argument is correct. How does a right to equal concern and respect follow? All the argument claims to prove is that certain preferences must not be counted. Nothing has been shown about how each person ought to treat others. (I owe this point to Michael Levin.)

But what if everyone *should* be treated with equal concern and respect? Koppelman needs a further premise to get his antidiscrimination project going, and he fares even worse here than in his attempt to justify equal concern and respect. Not only does he fail to justify the new premise, he does not even see that his argument requires it.

Imagine that I have a moral obligation to treat politely any book that I review. (Let us hope and pray that I do not lie under this obligation—otherwise I am finished.) If I fail to be polite in a review, it does not follow that the book's author has a right of redress against me. Perhaps I have just failed to do what I ought, and that ends the matter. If, *per impossible*, it transpires that I have been grossly unfair to Koppelman, it does not follow that he has the right to reply to me in *The Mises Review*.

Note that I do *not* claim that he lacks such a right; rather, the claim is that my bad treatment of him does not by itself entail that he does have it. (Just let him try....) The application to Koppelman's argument is obvious.

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Suppose that the groups about which he is concerned—blacks, women, and homosexuals—*have* been treated without equal consideration and respect. It does not follow that they are entitled to remedial action. Once more, perhaps all that we are justified in asserting is that those who treat them in this malign way should not do so.

Koppelman takes it as obvious that failure to be treated with equal consideration is an injury that calls for remedy. Put crudely, his view is that we all have the right to a certain level of self-esteem. We must not be stigmatized; otherwise, we might not feel good about ourselves. And, especially if you are a member of at least one of Koppelman's Big Three groups, you may enlist the state to mold your detractors so that they behave more suitably.

Put crudely, Koppelman's view is that we all have the right to a certain level of self-esteem.

The antidiscrimination project appears vulnerable on yet another ground. Even if you accept Koppelman's view of rights, you do not yet have enough to set the state going on its reconditioning program. It must first be shown that the relevant groups have in fact been stigmatized in the morally forbidden way.

Koppelman frequently is quite lax about showing this. Too often, he accepts without question statements by radical propagandists. He takes at face value the following gems from Catharine MacKinnon: "Men's...perspectives and concern define quality in scholarship, their experiences and obsessions define merit, their objectification of life defines art...their genitals define sex" (pp. 122–23, quoting MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*). What the radical feminist said is not evidence.

Furthermore, he regards blacks as one of the main stigmatized groups in American society. But "[w]hile it is evident that some blacks do suffer this kind of damage, the most thorough aggregate studies of self-concept among blacks have found that 'personal self-esteem among black population [is] either equal to or greater than that among whites'" (p. 61; the internal quotation is from a paper by Judith R. Porter and Robert E. Washington).

Koppelman responds that even if blacks have satisfactory self-esteem, they may be made angry and resentful by unequal treatment. This seems to me entirely plausible; but how did we get from a right to self-esteem to a right not to be made angry and resentful? If we are supposed to have only "good," non-angry thoughts, we have entered Never Never Land.

The extreme nature of Koppelman's project emerges most clearly in the

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chapter "Lesbians and Gay Men." As he himself acknowledges, we are not obligated to treat immoral conduct with equal concern and respect. We should *not* accord equal respect to Jeffrey Dahmer and his less omnivorous fellow citizens. But many people think homosexual conduct immoral: must their position not be shown false before gays and lesbians are welcomed into Koppelman's project?

Koppelman addresses this concern in exactly two sentences: "This is not the place to refute the various justifications for the stigmatization of homosexuality that are on offer. That has been done elsewhere" (p. 151). Well, so much for that.

By "justification" Koppelman means secular arguments. Religious arguments in his view merit no consideration whatsoever: "The only arguments for the stigma that seem unanswerable are the religious ones, and by their terms they are not open to philosophical critique. [Why not?] For example, many Americans are Christians or Jews who interpret the Bible as forbidding homosexual conduct, and that settles the issues for them" (p. 151). Our supposed champion of equal respect feels entitled to dismiss the main religions of the West without a moment's concern.

I fear that the Christians and Jews in question would not fare very well in a state run as Koppelman would like. "Inevitably, state efforts to reduce any kind of discrimination will implicitly tell those whose religious beliefs sanction such discrimination that their religious beliefs are false and that they ought to change them" (p. 152). Koppelman's project is a recipe for totalitarianism—a fact he regards as a weighty but not conclusive objection to it. ◆

THE U.S. AS SAVIOR

Freedom Betrayed: How America Led a Global Democratic Revolution, Won the Cold War, and Walked Away

Michael A. Ledeen
AEI Press, 1996, viii + 167 pgs.

Freedom Betrayed is a spirited polemic in support of a contradictory thesis. We need less government, and so we must sponsor a worldwide Democratic Revolution (capitals courtesy of our author) that rests on a massive increase in the power of the state.

Not content with his central contradiction, Ledeen adds additional contradictions to support his thesis. On the one hand, the Soviet Union was "an anomaly, both historically and economically: a military empire based on a third-world country that could not compete in the world marketplace, with a hopeless economic system at the mercy of commodity prices.... There was no way the Kremlin could maintain the empire on this miserable cash flow" (pp. 41–42).

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Here, plainly, our author asserts that Russian Communism faced inevitable doom. Or does he? He elsewhere, on the other hand, assails the view that economic conditions by themselves doomed the Soviets. "Those who argue this way [that the U.S. should have followed a less aggressive policy during the Cold War] usually offer a narrow, economic explanation for the fall of the Soviet Empire and the end of communism: the economic system failed, and the empire collapsed accordingly. Yet this is not an explanation at all, for the Soviet system was a failure from the beginning.... If economic conditions caused the fall of the Soviet Empire, it should have fallen much earlier" (p. 4).

Economic failure insured the collapse of communism; economic failure did not do so. Ledeen cannot have both propositions, but which is correct? Students of Austrian economics should have little difficulty in answering. A socialist economy, as Mises long ago demonstrated, leads to calculational chaos. To anyone informed by sound economics, the Soviet fall was only a matter of time. Nor can it be objected that Mises's

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Without Western aid, then, no communism. Why then was the massively statist Cold War necessary?

argument does not apply, because the Soviet economy did not collectivize everything. True enough; but it was collectivist enough for the deadly process of disintegration to take effect.

But what of Ledeen's objection? If the Soviet economy suffered from a fatal illness, it was, like Sarah Bernhardt, a long time dying. Oddly enough, Ledeen in large part answers his own query. "In a valuable three-volume work written a quarter-century ago, Anthony C. Sutton showed in detail that at the very start of its existence, the Soviet Union was provided with basic technology from the West...the Soviet system was heavily-fatally-dependent on Western know-how" (p. 44).

Without Western aid, then, no communism. Why then was the massively statist Cold War necessary? Ledeen maintains that the United States rightly pursued a course of worldwide military commitments to halt the Evil Empire's surge after power. This statist crusade aimed at promoting the American cause, one of limited government.

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Had Ledeen grasped the import of his own analysis of the Soviet economy, he might have escaped from the Orwellian project of using statism and militarism to battle socialism. Given the weakness of the Soviet system, why not stand aside and allow it to fall?

Ledeen might object that I have distorted his analysis. If the Soviet economy depended on Western technology, does not an attempt to cripple that economy rest on denying the Soviets access to that technology? And does not that policy, in turn, demand an extensive system of export controls? Intervention, not isolation, is the order of the day.

The Cold War was a statist crusade aimed at promoting the American cause, one of limited government.

If Ledeen were to argue in this way, he would fail to grasp the full force of Sutton's point. Soviet economic planning benefited from extensive Western governmental aid programs and loans. Absent these, the Soviet economy could not have continued. Controls on private investment were not needed: as always, government was the problem, not the solution.

Further, suppose that Ledeen is right: The imperative need to bring communism to a quick demise justified restrictions on private businesses' export of technology to Soviet Russia. Certainly, export controls depart from the free market: but we would still be a long way from the global crusade that our author desires.

Ledeen would no doubt respond that we have not accurately seen the danger. Even if the weakness of central planning is fatal to socialism, a centralized state may strike at the West before its own catastrophe impends. Had such heroic figures as Truman and Marshall not launched the Cold War, the United States might now be a province of the Soviet Empire. And the danger to us does not lie altogether in the past. We must today pursue a militant course against the menace of Red China. Readers will not be surprised to learn that control of technologically advanced exports to China ranks high on our author's list of priorities for policy.

Mr. Ledeen paints a vivid picture of a possible danger—relax our grip, and we risk falling victim to Communist imperialism. But he never inquires about the likelihood of a threat of this kind. Readers of *The Mises Review* will, I suspect, require no instruction from Ledeen about the invidious qualities of Communist rule. But it does not follow from the manifold horrors of "scientific socialism" that Communist countries posed a military threat to us in the

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past, or that they do so now. Neither does it follow that the militarization of the U.S. economy and a program of worldwide military commitments are the best ways to cope with a Communist military menace to us, if in fact it does exist.

Of course, I have not shown the falsity of Mr. Ledeen's assessment of the military threat from communism. But this is not to the point here. Rather, this burden is on Mr. Ledeen to show why a departure from our traditional policy of nonintervention in foreign affairs is justified. Our author altogether declines to answer this burden of proof.

America in our author's opinion has a messianic mission to export the blessings of democracy to all and sundry.

Instead, he has a preconceived scheme with which he views not only the Cold War, but all of twentieth-century history. "The pattern of modern American history is one of brief spasms of international activity, followed by rapid demobilization and prolonged disengagement.... After the Wilsonian spasm, we withdrew into righteous solitude, unmoved even by the onslaught of fascism, until the Japanese providentially [!] bombed us into war just in the nick of time" (p. 64). One shudders at the prospect of the United States's having avoided World War II—a near miss indeed.

Ledeen's response to the accusation that he views history through a fixed formula may surprise the reader. He admits, nay, glories in the charge. "We do not wish to be part of the outside world, but we do wish to change it, to democratize it, to make it more like us. We are an ideological nation, and our most successful leaders are ideologues" (p. 3).

Our author goes further: America in his opinion has a messianic mission to export the blessings of democracy to all and sundry. Critics of Marxism, including Eric Voegelin and Murray Rothbard, have sometimes claimed that leftist political doctrines apply to the secular world categories that are in truth religious. Few before Mr. Ledeen have doubted that, if true, this point was a severe criticism of these ideologies. For our author messianism is a badge to be worn with pride.

What would happen if America were to act on the basis of Mr. Ledeen's romantic vaporizing? The policies Ledeen supports would move us away from the free economy and limited state to which he professes allegiance. We learn that "exports cannot possibly form the core of a coherent American foreign policy. The long-term effect of this kind of trade-for-its-own sake is to ensure that we will face fierce commercial competition in areas where we could

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Ledeen's loud praise of freedom would ring truer if he had a clearer idea of what freedom means.

easily maintain an overwhelming domination" (p. 96). One pauses, astonished, at Ledeen's devotion to the free market. Our confidence in the author as a friend of the limited state does not increase when we learn of his regret that the United States did not sponsor Nuremberg-style tribunals to try the former leaders of the Communist bloc.

Mr. Ledeen ranges widely, and a few details off the main theme merit comment. He usefully notes that "[Francisco] Franco recognized that his movement and the authoritarian system he created were destined to disappear with his death, and the bulk of the evidence suggest that he was certainly not disturbed by the prospect" (p. 21). The United States did not "impose democratic capitalism on West Germany" (p. 63); it resisted Ludwig Erhard's free-market reforms. Ledeen rightly praises the scholarship of Renzo DeFelice on Italian fascism, but I seriously doubt that Ledeen's book of interviews with him contributed in a major way to the "defeat of communist ideology in Italy" (p. 25). He greatly overstates Raymond Aron's significance as a political philosopher (p. 27). Ledeen's praise for Emmanuel Beau de Loménie, a historian of the French aristocracy, is welcome; but it would have been better had he managed to spell his name correctly—he gives it as "Beau de Leaumenie" (pp. 141–42). Was it a slogan of the American Republic that "taxation without representation is treason" (p. 88)? When you stop to think about it, taxation without representation is *not* treason.

Ledeen's loud praise of freedom would ring truer if he had a clearer idea of what freedom means. His crusade seems no more likely to succeed than the medieval variety. ◆

Out With Hayek, In With Goldhagen

"Hayek's Political Philosophy and His Economics"

Jeffrey Friedman
Critical Review (Winter 1997): 1–10

Jeffrey Friedman introduces a special issue of his journal devoted to F.A. Hayek with a peculiar claim. Before turning to it, though, I find it odd that, in the issue, only one article, Peter J. Boettke's

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"What Went Wrong with Economics?" and a book review, are favorable to Hayek's thought. Is this a good way to proceed in a magazine allegedly aimed at promoting classical liberalism? (To avert an obvious rejoinder, I should add that Hayek most definitely is not criticized in this issue for being insufficiently libertarian.)

But it is not the issue as a whole to which I wish to draw attention here. Mr. Friedman includes in his article a bizarre argument and an even odder claim. He maintains that Hayek's account in *The Road to Serfdom* of the rise of Nazism is "narrowly economistic (and intellectualistic)...he interprets all thinkers as being primarily motivated by their understanding of the source of social order. Is it planned or is it spontaneous—overlooking the tangential nature of this question for most people, even most intellectuals" (p. 8, n. 1).

Instead of Hayek, Friedman recommends "history for fools."

This criticism of Hayek rests on a crass misunderstanding. Hayek claimed that socialists and other "advanced thinkers" wished to impose a pattern on society, at great cost to human freedom. This hardly implies that those "constructivist" thinkers were interested in the question—indeed a recondite one—of whether social order is spontaneous or imposed.

Quite the contrary, I should have thought that part of the appeal of constructivist rationalism stems from its proponents' lack of awareness that there is an alternative to their view. The socialists wished to impose a *particular* order, according to Hayek; he does not say that they were concerned with the *nature* of social order.

If Hayek fails, what has Friedman to put in his place? For the most part, his list of "masterpieces in the vast literature" could be taken from the reading list of a standard survey course of Twentieth-Century European History. It is surprising though, that after condemning Hayek for being overly intellectualistic, he recommends Fritz Stern's *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, a straightforward history of ideas. But this is a minor point.

What is genuinely worthy of notice is that Mr. Friedman lists Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* as another "masterpiece." Christopher Hitchens has termed the same volume a "non-book" and "history for fools." Readers interested in the basis for this view of Goldhagen's book ought to have a look at Norman G. Finkelstein, "Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's 'Crazy' Thesis: A Critique of *Hitler's Willing Executioners*" in *New Left Review* (July–August 1997), pp. 39–87.

Finkelstein shows that Goldhagen's work rests on gross abuse of his sources. One example must here

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suffice. Goldhagen notes that between 1867 and 1914, twelve trials for ritual murder took place in Germany and Austria-Hungary. He cites a standard work by Peter Pulzer as his source, but leaves unmentioned Pulzer's statement that eleven of these trials collapsed. By such means Goldhagen "proves" his thesis of the prevalence of "eliminationist" anti-Semitism in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Europe. ◆

THE INVISIBLE HOPPE

"A Free-Market Case Against Open Immigration?"

Donald Boudreaux
"Notes From FEE"
The Freeman (October 1997)

Professor Donald Boudreaux, recently installed as president of the Foundation for Economic Education, is off to a bad start. He offers some thoughts on immigration which to my mind succeed only in darkening counsel on this difficult topic.

Boudreaux discusses an argument that he says has recently attracted attention in libertarian circles. To summarize his summary, the argument in question is this: a purely voluntary society, in which all property was private, would not be one with "open borders." Quite the contrary, each owner could admit, or refuse admittance, to whomever he wishes. A free society ought to approach this ideal as closely as possible. Hence, the government, in charge of "public" property, ought to act in its immigration policy as near as it can to a private property owner. The result of doing so is apt to be carefully controlled immigration, not unrestricted entry.

The government, in charge of "public" property, ought to act in its immigration policy as near as it can to a private property owner.

Professor Boudreaux directs three objections against this argument. Before turning to these, I am constrained to take exception to a curious omission in Boudreaux's article. The argument he discusses did not spring into the world from thin air: as Boudreaux knows full well, Professor Hans-Hermann Hoppe of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, has written extensively in its support.

But Boudreaux does not so much as mention Hoppe, much less cite any paper of his on the topic. Surely

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Hoppe's thought experiment of asking about immigration under private property jars us out of our complacent belief that libertarian principles mandate absolutely open borders.

the *Freeman*'s readers, many of whom do not know Hoppe's work, are entitled to know where they may look should they wish to compare Boudreaux's criticisms with the presentation of the argument offered by its author.

By contrast, let me cite the practice of a paragon of academic fairness —myself. When *I* decide to smear a book or article, I always inform readers exactly what I am criticizing. Readers can then go to the original source and make their own judgment about my critical faculties. Professor Boudreaux ought to heed this elementary principle of fair controversy.

In contrast with Boudreaux, I find Hoppe's argument a most valuable contribution. Its main importance, as it seems to me, is not as a deductive proof of what a free society's immigration policy ought to be. Rather, the thought experiment of asking about immigration under private property jars us out of our complacent belief that libertarian principles mandate absolutely open borders.

Boudreaux puts the case for that common view succinctly in the third argument he directs against the Invisible Hoppe. Immigrants who are not on welfare aggress against no one: hence to block their entry is coercion. And this the non-aggression axiom forbids.

But does it? Hoppe's thought experiment serves to remind us that libertarian rights to freedom of action must be viewed in connection with entitlements to property. May someone enter "public" property at will? I suggest that the non-aggression principle provides no answer to this. From (1) you may enter unowned property at will, it does not follow that (2) you may enter "public" property at will. The issue seems to me one of prudence rather than rights. And Hoppe has the merit, by his striking example, of bringing this gap in the usual argument for unrestricted immigration to the attention of libertarians.

Boudreaux's other two arguments may be dealt with more briefly. He suggests that government, possessed of the power to coerce, cannot be granted the same discretion as a private owner. This strikes me as an excellent point: but how does it bear on the issue under discussion? The need to limit the government's discretion hardly requires us to institute

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The need to limit the government's discretion hardly requires us to institute free immigration.

free immigration. A policy of allowing no immigration at all, for example, restricts governmental discretion as well as open borders.

More realistically, the nature of rules needed to restrict governments has been studied extensively by public choice economists. I had thought this Professor Boudreaux's area of specialization. I am sure he could devise appropriate rules for a minimal state wishing to limit immigration far better than I.

Boudreaux next attempts a *reductio*. If the government may forbid entry into "public" property, may it not also regulate speech in public places? And is this not self-evidently absurd?

I quite fail to see that it is. Why may panhandlers and assorted riffraff not be banned from airports? Do you have the right to enter a "public" street whenever you wish, regardless of traffic regulations? Once more the issues of use of public property seem to me prudential in character, rather than rights-based.

And attention to prudence leads us to question an aspect, so far undiscussed, of Boudreaux's third argument. He maintains, once more, that immigrants not on welfare coerce no one. But what about the many who are on welfare? May a country, anticipating that large numbers of people will enter its territory in order to obtain welfare, act to prevent this? And what of those immigrants who benefit on entry from affirmative action? May citizens concerned that immigrants will form pressure groups hostile to the principles and culture of a free society take preventive measures against the dangers they fear? If not, why not?

Professor Boudreaux refers to alleged friends of freedom, who propose restrictions on immigration. To name the nameless, these include Murray Rothbard and Ralph Raico, as well as Hans Hoppe. I do not recall that Boudreaux has been granted the authority to anathematize them. Fair-minded supporters of free immigration should recognize that Boudreaux's attitude is the height of presumption.

I close on an unaccustomed irenic note. Those in search of further discussion on this vital issue should look out for a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Libertarian Studies* entirely devoted to immigration. The issue, edited by Ralph Raico, includes both supporters of free immigration, such as Walter Block, and critics, including Hoppe and John Hospers. *Some* people believe that immigration merits discussion, not curt dismissal and invective. I regret that Donald Boudreaux is not yet among them. ◆

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